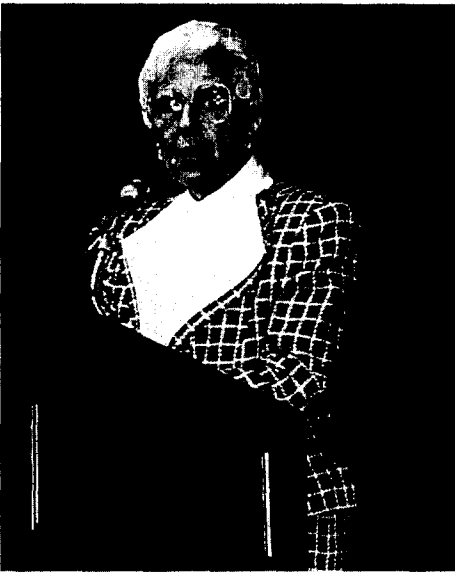


'90 CENSUS



Census Bureau Director Barbara Everitt Bryant also read a prepared statement and answered reporters' questions at the press conference.

ery winner, we need solid ground to stand on in making any changes. I do not find solid enough ground to proceed with an adjustment.

"To make comparisons between the accuracy of the census and the adjusted numbers, various types of statistical tests are used. There is a general agreement that at the national level, the adjusted counts are better, though independent analysis shows that adjusted counts, too, suffer from serious flaws. Below the national level, however, the experts disagree with respect to the accuracy of the shares measured from an adjustment. The classical statistical tests of whether accuracy is improved by an adjustment at State and local levels show mixed results and depend critically on assessments of the amount of statistical variation in the survey. Some question the validity of these tests, and many believe more work is necessary before we are sure of the conclusions.

"Based on the measurements so far

completed, the Census Bureau estimated that the proportional share of about 29 States would be made more accurate and about 21 States would be made less accurate by adjustment.

Looking at cities, the census appears more accurate in 11 of the 23 metropolitan areas with 500,000 or more persons: Phoenix, Washington, DC, Jacksonville, Chicago, Baltimore, New York City, Memphis, Dallas, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. Many large cities would appear to be less accurately treated under an adjustment. While these analyses indicate that more people live in jurisdictions where the adjusted counts appear more accurate, one third of the population lives in areas where the census appears more accurate. As the population units get smaller, including small and medium sized cities, the adjusted figures become increasingly unreliable.

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When the Census Bureau made allowances for plausible estimates of factors not yet measured, those comparisons shifted toward favoring the accuracy of the census enumeration. Using this test, 28 or 29 States were estimated to be made less accurate if the adjustment were to be used.

"What all these tests show, and no one disputes, is that the adjusted figures for some localities will be an improvement and for others the census counts will be better. While we know that some will fare better and some will fare worse under an adjustment, we don't really know how much better

or how much worse. If the scientists cannot agree on these issues, how can we expect the losing cities and States as well as the American public to accept this change?

"The evidence also raises questions about the stability of adjustment procedures. To calculate a nationwide adjustment from the survey, a series of statistical models are used which depend on simplifying assumptions. Changes in these assumptions result in different population estimates. Consider the results of two possible adjustment methods that were released by the Census Bureau on June 13, 1991. The technical differences are small, but the differences in results are significant. The apportionment of the House of Representatives under the selected scheme moved two seats relative to the apportionment implied by the census, whereas the modified method moved only one seat. One expert found that among five reasonable alternative methods of calculating adjustments, none of the resulting apportionments of the House were the same, and eleven different States either lost or gained a seat in at least one of the five methods.

"I recognize that the formulas for apportioning the House are responsive to small changes and some sensitivity should be expected. What is unsettling, however, is that the choice of the adjustment method selected by Bureau officials can make a difference in apportionment, and the political outcome of that choice can be known in advance. I am confident that political considerations played no role in the Census Bureau's choice of an adjustment model for the 1990 census. I am deeply concerned, however, that adjustment would open the door to political tampering with the census on the

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Secretary's Statement

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future. The outcome of the enumeration process cannot be directly affected in such a way.

"My concerns about adjustment are compounded by the problems an adjustment might cause in the redistricting process, which is contentious and litigious enough without an adjustment. An adjusted set of numbers will certainly disrupt the political process and may create paralysis in the States that are working on redistricting or have completed it. Some people claim that they will be denied their rightful political representation without an adjustment. Those claims assume that the distribution of the population is improved by an adjustment. This conclusion is not warranted based on the evidence available.

"I also have serious concerns about the effect an adjustment might have on future censuses. I am worried that an adjustment would remove the incentive of States and localities to join in the effort to get a full and complete count. The Census Bureau relies heavily on the active support of State and local leaders to encourage census participation in their communities. Because census counts are the basis for political representation and Federal funding allocations, communities have a vital interest in achieving the highest possible participation rates. If civic leaders and local officials believe that an adjustment will rectify the failures in the census, they will be hard pressed to justify putting census outreach programs above the many other needs clamoring for their limited resources. Without the partnership of States and cities in creating public awareness and a sense of involvement in the census, the result is likely to be

a further decline in participation.

"In looking at the record of public comment on this issue, I am struck by the fact that many civic leaders are under the mistaken impression that an adjustment will fix a particular problem they have identified – for example, specific housing units or group quarters that they believe we missed. It does not do so. It is not a recount. What an adjustment would do is add over 6 million unidentified people to the census by duplicating the records of people already counted in the census while subtracting over 900,000 people who were actually identified and counted. The decisions about which places gain people and which lose people are based on statistical conclusions drawn from the sample survey. The additions and deletions in any particular community are often based largely on data gathered from communities in other States.

"The procedures that would be used to adjust the census are at the forefront

"With this difficult decision behind us, we will commit ourselves anew to finding sound, fair, and acceptable ways to continue to improve the census process."

of statistical methodology. Such research deserves and requires careful professional scrutiny before it is used to affect the allocation of political representation. Since the results of the evaluation studies of the survey were made available, several mistakes have been found which altered the certainty of some of the conclusions drawn by my advisors. The analysis continues, and new findings are likely. I am concerned that if an adjustment were

made, it would be made on the basis of research conclusions that may well be reversed in the next several months.

"It is important that research on this problem continue. We will also continue the open discussion of the quality of the census and the survey and will release additional data so that independent experts can analyze it. We must also look forward to the next census. Planning for the year 2000 has begun. A public advisory committee on the next census has been established and by early fall I will announce the membership of that committee. I have instructed the Census Bureau's year 2000 task force to consider all options for the next census, including methods for achieving sound adjustment techniques.

"I give my heartfelt thanks to the many people who have devoted so much time and energy to this enterprise. The staff at the Census Bureau have demonstrated their professionalism at every turn through the last two difficult years. They executed a fine census and an excellent survey and then condensed a challenging research program into a few short months. I am deeply grateful for their help. Let me reiterate my sincere thanks to the special advisory panel for their substantial contribution. The staff at the Department, especially those in the Economics and Statistics Administration, also deserve praise.

"With this difficult decision behind us, we will commit ourselves anew to finding sound, fair, and acceptable ways to continue to improve the census process. We welcome the leadership of Congress and other public officials, community groups, and technical experts in maximizing the effectiveness and minimizing the difficulties of the year 2000 census."